ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTION

Description of water body:

Name: Newlan Creek Reservoir
Water Body Code: 17-9330
County: Meagher
Legal description: T10N, R6E, S11

Name of the drainage where the water is located:

Newlan Creek Reservoir is an impoundment on Newlan Creek which is a tributary of the Smith River.

Fish species proposed for introduction:
Kokanee

Is this species legally present in the drainage?
Yes, 352,700 kokanee were stocked in Lake Sutherlin from 1952-1958. Lake Sutherlin is located in the North Fork Smith River. There are no known wild populations of kokanee in the Smith River drainage. Kokanee are present in trace levels downstream in the Missouri River. These fish are stocked in the Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir and Holter Lake and infrequently spill over/through Hauser and Holter dams.

Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:
No species of special concern are present in the immediate drainage.

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations: __X__ None _ Minor __ Major

Comments: None expected.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation?
None _X_ Minor __ Major

Comments: Kokanee eat plankton. They would only compete for food with other trout species in the reservoir. The other trout species (rainbow, brown, cutthroat, brook) also eat plankton in addition to other food items such as aquatic insects, crayfish and other fish. Suckers and burbot are the only other wild fish in the reservoir. Competition for food between suckers and kokanee would be a negative impact to young suckers, but this species is not considered valuable in Newlan Creek Reservoir as a game species. Impacts to suckers are not expected to be substantial. Burbot are a game fish found in the reservoir. No competition for food or space between burbot and kokanee are anticipated. Burbot may prey upon kokanee.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction? __ None _X_ Minor __ Major

Comments: Plankton diversity and abundance may be reduced by kokanee.

Kokanee typically live for 3-4 years. After spawning, or attempted spawning, the fish typically die. Kokanee carcasses would be consumed by crayfish, burbot and fish eating birds.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location: __ None _X_ Minor __ Major

Comments: Some kokanee may reproduce in the creek that feeds the reservoir or along rocky shoals of the reservoir. Newlan Creek is highly silted and does not provide good spawning habitat for kokanee.

If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked? Yes, it would be feasible. Nearly every kokanee population in Montana is dependent on hatchery stocking to maintain at sport levels. As such, controlling the population would be possible by reducing or eliminating stocking.

Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? No.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action). Do not stock.

Describe and evaluate mitigation, stipulations, or other control measures enforceable by the agency, if any.

Mitigation is not applicable because no quantifiable impact has been identified.

List any other agencies or individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction:

The intended purpose is to provide a positive impact by providing angling opportunity for a species desired by Montana anglers.

List all agencies and individuals who have been notified of this proposed introduction:

The EA will be posted on the Montana FWP website. A number of anglers in the Great Falls and White Sulphur Springs areas were contacted prior to developing this EA in order to conduct preliminary scoping of public interest and to identify unforeseeable impacts. No impacts were identified through preliminary scoping. There appears to be public support for developing this aspect of the Newlan Creek Reservoir fishery.

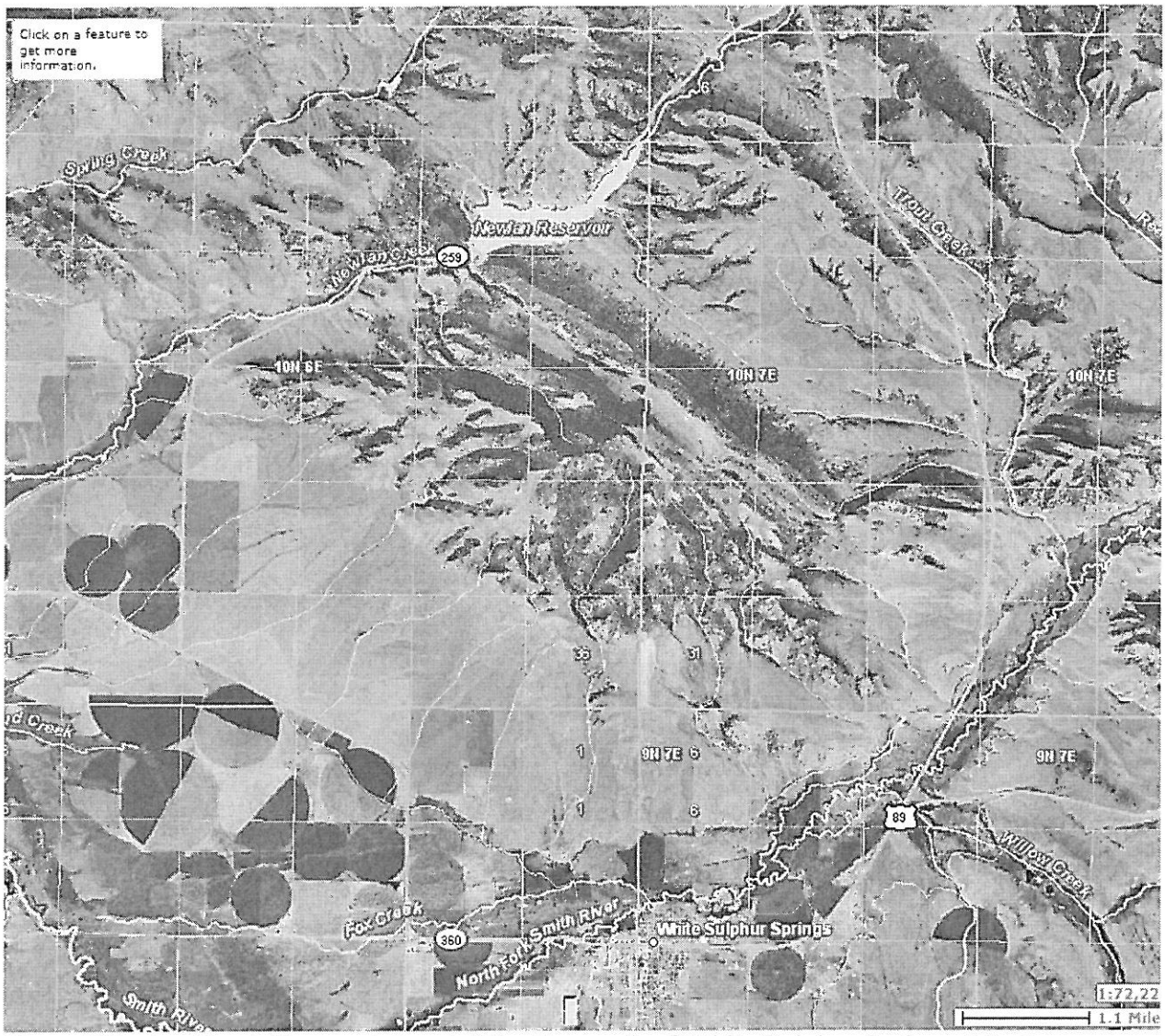
Based on this evaluation, is an EIS required? YES/NO? If no, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

No. Impacts expected to be very minor.

EA prepared by: Grant Grisak **Date:** April 30, 2014

Comments will be accepted until: May 30, 2014

Comments should be sent to: MDFW&P, 4600 Giant Springs Rd, Great Falls, MT 59405



Map of Newlan Creek Reservoir located 7 miles north of White Sulphur Springs, Montana.